WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   In an information network having at least one character-enabled network site, a method of presenting data to a network user based on choices made by the user while within a character-enabled network site, said method comprising the steps of:

creating a character having a plurality of attributes, each attribute selected by the user from a plurality of attributes presented to the user through a user interface to create a persona for the character, each attribute defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image data; and

providing to the user interface, at least one of either an audio presentation and a visual image presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the persona of the character created.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein each attribute comprises at least one of a physical characteristic, emotional characteristic and personal interest of the character.

3.   The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing persona data indicative of the selected attributes.

4.   The method of claim 3 wherein the step of storing data comprises the step of storing the persona data in a database such that the character may be recreated for future use.

5.   The method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of presentations comprise at least one of either a passive presentation and an interactive presentation, each in turn comprising at least one of either a visual image displayed on the user interface and sound heard through the user interface.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein, when an interactive presentation is provided to the user interface, the method further comprises the step of, in response to user interaction with the interactive presentation, providing to the user interface at least

one of either an audio presentation and a visual image presentation selected from the plurality of presentations.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of storing data indicative of user interaction with the interactive presentation.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the character-enabled network site comprises a plurality of pages and the plurality of presentations comprise at least one link to one of the pages.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the information network comprises a plurality of other network sites and the plurality of presentations comprises at least one link to one of the other network sites.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the information network comprises a plurality of other character-enabled network sites and the plurality of presentations comprises at least one link to one of the other character-enabled network sites.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of, when the user accesses another character-enabled network site, providing the persona data to that character-enabled network site.

transfer data

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the step of providing the persona data to the character-enabled network site accessed by the user comprises the step of transferring the data as a cookie to the network site.

13. An apparatus for presenting data to a network user based on choices made by the user while within a character-enabled network site, said apparatus comprising:

a character processor for creating a character having a plurality of attributes, each attribute selected by the user from a plurality of attributes presented to the user through
5 a user interface to create a persona for the character, each attribute defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image data; and

a selection processor for providing to the user interface, at least one of either an audio presentation and a visual image presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the persona of the character created.

14.   The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a database for storing persona data indicative of the selected attributes.

15.   The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the plurality of presentations comprise at least one of either a passive presentation and an interactive presentation, each in turn comprising at least one of a visual image displayed on the user interface and sound heard through the user interface.

16.   The apparatus of claim 15 wherein when an interactive presentation is provided to the user interface, the selection processor provides to the user interface at least one of either an audio presentation and a visual image presentation selected from the plurality of presentations in response to user interaction with the interactive 5   presentation.

17.   The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising a database for storing data indicative of user interaction with the interactive presentation.

18.   In an information network having at least one character-enabled network site, a method of presenting data to a network user based on choices made by the user while within a character-enabled network site, said method comprising the steps of:

associating a character with the user, the character having a plurality of attributes, 5   each attribute defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image data, the plurality of attributes collectively defining a character persona;

providing to the user interface, at least one interactive presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the character persona, the interactive presentation defined by at least one of audio data and visual image data; and

in response to user interaction with the interactive presentation, providing to the user interface at least one of another interactive presentation and a passive presentation, the passive presentation defined by at least one of audio data and visual image data.

19.   The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of storing data indicative of the character persona and the associated user interaction with the interactive presentation.

20.   The method of claim 18 wherein the step of providing to the user interface, at least one interactive presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the character persona comprises the steps of:

        linking the character persona with interactive presentations of interest; and

5   selecting for presentation to the user interface, those interactive presentation that are linked with the character persona.

21.   The method of claim 18 wherein the step of providing to the user interface at least one of another interactive presentation and a passive presentation in response to user interaction with the interactive presentation comprises the steps of:

        linking the user interaction with other interactive presentations and passive

5 presentations of interest; and

        selecting for presentation to the user interface, those other interactive presentations and passive presentations that are linked with the character persona.

22.   The method of claim 18 wherein the character-enabled network site comprises a plurality of site pages and the interactive presentations comprise links to site pages.

23.   The method of claim 18 wherein the information network comprises a plurality of network sites and the interactive presentation comprises links to network sites.

24.   The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of storing data indicative of user interaction with the interactive presentation.

25.   An apparatus for presenting data to a network user based on choices made by the user while within a character-enabled network site, said apparatus comprising:

a character processor for associating a character with the user, the character having a plurality of attributes, each attribute defined by at least one of either audio data

5   and visual image data, the plurality of attributes collectively defining a character persona;

a selection processor for providing to the user interface, at least one interactive presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the character persona, the interactive presentation defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image

10   data, and in response to user interaction with the interactive presentation, providing to the user interface at least one of another interactive presentation and a passive presentation, the passive presentation defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image data.

26.   The apparatus of claim 25 further comprising the step of storing data indicative of the character persona and the associated user interaction with the interactive presentation.

27.   The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the selection processor comprises:

a device for linking the character persona with interactive presentations of interest; and

a device for selecting for presentation to the user interface, those interactive

5   presentations that are linked with the character persona.

28.   The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the selection processor comprises:

a device for linking the user interaction with other interactive presentations and passive presentations of interest; and

a device for selecting for presentation to the user interface, those other interactive

5   presentations and passive presentations that are linked with the character persona.

29.   Within an information network having a database and at least one character-enabled network site accessible through a user interface with audio and visual image presentation capability, a method of obtaining and storing data indicative of one or more attribute selections made by a network user while within the character-enabled

5   network site, said method comprising the steps of:

storing at least one of either audio data and visual image data of a plurality of characters, each character having at least one associated modifiable attribute;

for each modifiable attribute, storing at least one of either audio data and visual image data of at least one modification attribute;

10   presenting the plurality of characters to the user through the user interface for selection by the user;

upon selection of a character, storing data indicative of the selected character in a database and presenting the at least one modification attribute to the user through the user interface for selection by the user; and

15   upon selection of the modification attribute, storing data indicative of the selected modification attribute in the database.

30.   An apparatus for obtaining and storing data indicative of one or more attribute selections made by a network user through a user interface with audio and visual image presentation capability, said apparatus comprising:

a character memory storing at least one of either audio data and visual image data

5   of a plurality of characters, each having at least one associated modifiable attribute;

for each modifiable attribute, an attribute memory storing at least one of either audio data and visual image data of at least one modification attribute;

a processor presenting the plurality of characters to the user through the user interface for selection by the user and upon selection of a character, presenting the at

10   least one modification attribute to the user for selection by the user; and

a database storing data indicative of the selected character and the selected at least one modification attribute.

31.   In an information network having at least one character-enabled network site, a method of sharing data among network users based on choices made by each of the users while within a character-enabled network site, said method comprising the steps of:

5   for each user, creating a character having a plurality of attributes, each attribute selected by the user from a plurality of attributes presented to the user through a user interface to create a character profile, each attribute defined by at least one of either audio data and visual image data;

providing to at least one user interface, at least one of either an audio
10   presentation and a visual image presentation indicative of at least one other character profile; and

providing a communications link between the users.

32.   The method of claim 31 further comprising the step of:

providing to the user interface, at least one of an interactive audio presentation and a interactive visual image presentation selected from a plurality of presentations based on the persona of the character created; and

5   in response to user interaction with the interactive presentation, updating the character profile.